

DEPARTMENT SNAPSHOTS

Recent News and Advances



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Agriculture and Applied Economics

Farmer-Led Initiatives Help Reduce Surface Water Pollution in Wisconsin

Whom do you ask when you want to fix a problem in your house? Colleagues and neighbors are probably high on the list. For farmers wishing to address local environmental problems, nearby peers are a similar community. In Wisconsin, an example are producer-led watershed (PLW) groups that focus on the leading cause of nutrient pollution in U.S. surface water: agricultural runoff, or water that carries excess nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilized cropland and livestock pastures into drainage areas known as watersheds.

Animal and Dairy Science

Michel Wattiaux Receives USDA National Teaching Award

Michel A. Wattiaux (*left*), Professor in the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, has been named the recipient of the 2025 USDA Excellence in College and University Teaching in Food and Agricultural Sciences Award in the National category. This highly competitive award, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture since 1992, recognizes exceptional educators who have made sustained and significant contributions to student learning in food and agricultural sciences.



Biochemistry

Brian Fox Steps Down as Chairman of the Department; Dr. Rick Amasino Takes Over

After ten and a half years, Brian Fox has stepped down as the Chair of the Department of Biochemistry. Fox shares, "This service has been the greatest honor of my life, and I am deeply appreciative of the support and encouragement I have received from colleagues and friends across the university." Professor Rick Amasino begins serving as Department Chair in January 2026. Rick has been a professor in the Department since 1985 and has served alongside me since 2020 as Vice Chair.



Genetics

Dr. Chris Todd Hittinger receives Vilas Mid-career Investigator Award

Hittinger, a professor in the Laboratory of Genetics and a leader in evolutionary genomics, is internationally recognized for his transformative work on yeast evolution, genetics, and biotechnology. His research program spans fundamental biological discovery, real-world applications in brewing and bioenergy, and innovative mentorship and training.



Nutritional Sciences

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025-2030

The newest version of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs), for 2025-2030, were recently released and garnered more media attention than previous releases. This was in part because the new DGAs were promoted as being a significant change from previous versions and better aligned with the goal of reducing chronic disease incidence.



Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences

Irwin Goldman Selected as Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Grower KWS Chair

Goldman has long served the plant science community at UW–Madison and growers across the Midwest. He also leads the Goldman Lab which specializes in beet, carrot, and onion breeding and genetics. "We are very proud to be part of the long history of vegetable breeding and genetics that began at UW in the 1950s," says Goldman.

